

did and she also gave the sacrificial priest (m̄cōd-gnas) a few rupees "for the monastery," which the priest received with a satisfied "Oh, Oh!" He then blessed her and assured her that her wish would now soon be fulfilled and that she would be delivered of a little boy. Meanwhile nothing of the kind happened. The lamas declared that perhaps unconsciously and without willing to do so, the Dragshos must have angered the Tara, so that their prayers and offerings had remained ineffective. The Dragshos people now let it go at that and did not bring any more offerings; the matter became too expensive, and Namgyal did not trust a single lama of the circle of his closer relatives any more, except the hermit Tsetan. Namgyal and his father had too often found themselves swindled by them. Within the following three years Chosskyid bore two girls; in the sixth year of their marriage there finally came the ardently desired son, a circumstance which caused great joy in the house of the Dragshos. By this the happiness of the young couple was increased and man and wife became even more strongly attached to one another.

How different was it in many another house in the village! The polyandrous relationship was the cause of much conflict, quarreling and jealousy; often the woman preferred one of the younger husbands to the oldest one who after all had a claim to the first right of a husband; often enough the younger husbands of one woman looked for compensation for lack of marital happiness outside the house. The man who goes on journeys cannot always be sure of the faithfulness of the wife he is leaving behind, especially when he is her sole owner; even less does the man who goes on travels remain bound to his promise to be faithful, during the time of his absence. Often the man sees only a maid in his wife, who must subordinate herself to him in all things and who must comply with all his moods and desires. Often he vents his displeasure with vicious maltreatment, and very frequently a complete break, a divorce (131), then takes place.

131. Divorces often occur in Tibet and are not infrequently brought about in the most frivolous manner. In the case of continuing unproductiveness of the woman, her unfaithfulness, or as a consequence of serious disagreement between man and wife, the man dismisses his wife; and frequently the latter also leaves her husband if he maltreats her. The old royal law (rgyal-k'rimis) states that the guilty party, the one who breaks up the marriage must pay the other party compensation

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CHAP. III.—THE PEOPLE

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of Láhaul. They are mendicant minstrels, the men playing the pipes and kettle-drums, while the women dance, sing and play the tambourine. They sometimes engage in trade, but only in a small way by barter; and the saying *Hensi ka sauda* implies that a transaction is mean and paltry. They never own land, and "the Boda no land, the dog no load" is a proverbial saying. They are considered low and disreputable; and other classes will not eat food together with or cooked by them. In 1868, of the men who returned themselves as Kanets, 382 were *lámás* or monks attached to the five monasteries. Of the women only about ten are nuns, and they do not spend the winter in the monasteries like the nuns of Láhaul, but live at home with their fathers or brothers. Many other women in Spiti live at home unmarried all their lives; others who cannot get married in a legitimate way walk off to Tibet with pedlars or traders, or go to live with some *dotul* or labouring man who takes their fancy. Some of the richer landholders have men-servants living in their houses who are known as *lápás*; they eat from their master's table, are servants of all work, and do not marry, though they often keep company with some unmarried woman of the house or neighbourhood. One or two men-servants are kept in each monastery to light fires, &c., and are called *thúds* or *togochís*.

The Thákurs are the gentry and quondam rulers of the valley. They are more or less pure Botias or Mongolians by blood, but are beginning, as the natural sequence to the Hindúising tendency already described, to assert a Rájpút origin. Three families of Thákurs retain in modern times a status of importance as *jágráddás*—that of Hari Chand, *negí* of Láhaul, who holds his village of Kolong, or Todpa, in *jágr*; that of Devi Chand, who holds Ghamrang; and that of Híra Chand, who holds Gondola. The aggregate cash assessment of these *jágrs* is Rs. 975, subject, however, to payments (*nazarána*) aggregating Rs. 250 per annum. Thákur Hari Chand, son of Tára Chand, in virtue of his office as *negí*, receives certain other emoluments. The most important of these are one-fourth the total revenue grazing dues in *khalas kothís*, and fines in criminal cases.

SECTION D.—VILLAGE COMMUNITIES AND TENURES.

Láhaul is sub-divided by the people into Rangloi or the Chandra valley, Gárah or Punán, the Bhága valley, and Pattan or the valley of the Chandra Bhága. The first valley contains four *kothís*, the second four, and the third six, making fourteen *kothís* in all. Some of the *kothís* correspond with the boundaries of the existing or extinct *jágrs* or fiefs of the Thákurs or petty barons of Láhaul. The rest are merely groups of villages or hamlets, which have for long past been connected for administration purposes. For instance, *kothí Raníkí* consists of several villages, scattered here and there among those of other *kothís*, which were formerly held in *jágr* by a Kúlu prince, and which have ever since held together as one community under one headman. Nor is the village (as Mr. Barnes says of the hamlet in Kangra) the elementary part of the system in Láhaul;

Chapter III, D.
Village Communities and Tenures.
Caste in Spiti.

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Leading families.

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Sub-divisions in
Láhaul: Nature of
townships and
villages.

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Divorce.

A son-in-law who has been adopted cannot be divorced by his wife as in Ladakh.

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There is no custom in Spiti of a widow divorcing herself from her dead husband.

Unfaithfulness and refusal to cohabit are reasons for divorce, but incompatibility of temper is not.

In cases of divorce both parties go to the Nono.

If the woman is in fault, her jewels and *perik* (head ornament) and a pony are given to the husband. If the man is in fault, a field is given to the woman for her maintenance, but she can only retain it so long as she does not marry again. The man may re-marry.

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A wife's adultery is usually condoned by the present of a few rupees to the injured husband. A husband's unfaithfulness usually only results in a quarrel. A single lapse is not ground for a divorce, and only cohabitation with his paramour can give his wife right to a divorce.

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Pregnancy.

A married woman wears white brooches till she is pregnant, when she wears red or black. Unmarried girls wear white brooches up to twelve and afterwards red or black.

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Naming.

The name of a child is selected by a *lmas* after reference to the Sacred Books, who receives for the service a *khala*, or piece of cloth, such as is given by visitors to a monastery.

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When naming the child, the *lmas* places a little bit of cloth upon it, or, if the child be not present, sends the cloth to its parents.

In every monastery *kisar*, or green, water is kept; i.e., water in which *kisar*, saffron, has been placed. And sometimes, but not always, when naming a child, the *lmas* sprinkles it with *kisar* water.

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within him, certainly caused by jealousy of his other brothers for their relations with the common wife.

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There are certain instances of extra-marital relations between people in this polyandrous community, but they are highly condemned and heavy sanctions are applied. In a *bagma* marriage, if the woman commits adultery, she is turned out of the house if she is childless, and the brothers choose another wife. If she is with child, she is fined and has to pay out of her personal property. As for the man, the co-respondent, he is beaten and/or has to pay compensation to the legal husbands. In a *magpa* marriage, where the woman is heir to the property, has the care of it and can marry as many men as she desires, infidelity of the wife is the only case in which the husbands can get a divorce. Otherwise, she can divorce them, but not *vice versa*. If the man is the adulterer in such a marriage, nothing is done except in the family where he has committed the adultery. In the case of unmarried people, the woman is usually turned out of the house if she has premarital relations and should attempt to marry the man with whom she has had these relations. If the trespasser is a man, he is treated exactly like an adulterer in the usual *bagma* marriage.

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Illegitimate children are usually hushed up. They are often adopted into some family or are sent to the monasteries as novices, so that nobody knows exactly what their origins are. As far as I could find out, there seems to be no prostitution in Tibet, and husbands suffering from the polyandrous organization do not have that outlet. Something, however, certainly is known about prostitution, for Tibetans, who never smoke, tell you that they do not do so because tobacco was a plant grown with the menstrual flow of a prostitute.

As far as I could find out, homosexuality is condemned, even in the monasteries, and certainly despised if practised, and I could not find any proof of it. But local Europeans who know the

There were a few instances of frigidity and impotence, Tashi Dawa said. He treated these with aphrodisiacs and they gave him no more trouble after that. The medicine used in such cases was the juice of the Japutsitsi plant, popularly called Gege of Wangla, (I was not able to identify this plant botanically and therefore cannot give its Latin name). 757
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I met Thakur Mangal Chand, alias Tashi Dawa again, upon other occasions, and was treated to long discourses on Tibetan medicine. The data, which I noted at the time appears to be irrelevant to the question of polyandry, however, apart from the interesting cases mentioned above, so I shall abstain from giving a fuller account of it here. It is nevertheless perhaps worth mentioning that I heard from the amchi that abortion was practised on unmarried women and even on married ones in certain circumstances (when it was too apparent that conception was not due to relations with a husband). To bring about the required results, he made use of a mixture of horse-blood, red soot called *tsot*(?), musk and bee's wax. 115
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On another occasion, I was interested to hear from a *gelong* (*dGe-sLong*), or high ordained lamaist priest, called Dön-drup, whom I met on the 27th of June, 1938, in the village of Billing near Kyelang, of the way in which sex plays a role in reincarnation. When a soul is searching for a womb in which to be conceived for rebirth, should the woman eventually chosen love her husband, it is sure that the new earthly form taken will be female. If, on the contrary, the woman does not love her husband, a boy will be born. 775
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This statement was strangely reminiscent of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz (Third Edition, 1957), in which it is said that if the deceased, who is to be reborn, is about become a male, an intense feeling of aversion for the father and of attraction for the mother comes upon him, or vice-versa as regards birth as a female.

B. POLYANDRY IN RUPCHU (*RUP-CH'HU*) AND LADAK (*LA-DWAGS*)

1. RUPCHU

On the way between Lahul and the Rupchu plateau, I encountered many people on the road, mainly in the evening when we reached camping places. These people varied between Tibetan nomads moving south with goods to sell, Lahulis visiting Kulu or returning from there, and Tibetan pilgrims on their way to and from the holy Buddhist places in the Indian plains. 484
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[768] refuses to live any longer – she will sometimes tie a thread between one of her fingers and one of those of the (dead) man, and cut it across to show that she is free.

• [839] Divorce in Ladak is irrevocable, but can be conditional. It is thus sometimes stipulated in cases of proven infidelity that the partner at fault will not be authorized to remarry the paramour, and that if this does take place, the marriage will be void and the divorce non-existent.

A *bag-ma* wife can be divorced by her husband(s) on the grounds of mutual incompatibility of temperament, of her own infidelity (in which case she loses all rights of compensation), of her carelessness and ignorance of her household duties, of what her parents-in-law consider to be her serious defects.

A *bag-ma* wife will be allowed to divorce her husband on the other hand, if impotence is proved in his case, if he is obviously unfaithful and adulterous, if he ill-treats her, or if she is wilfully neglected.

[595] In a *mag-pa* marriage, the wife can repudiate her husband and divorce him without any reason whatever; all she has to do is to turn him out of the house. Consequently, to be a *mag-pa* is not an enviable position really, in Ladak. Many younger brothers seem, however, to prefer it to being the junior partners of a polyandrous marriage, and it is to be presumed that much depends on the merits of each individual case. Immorality in a *mag-pa* is very rarely evoked by the wife, my informants told me, as his conduct in that respect is of no great importance. If he should change his religion, however, and become a Moslem or a Christian, that is another matter, and the wife will immediately be entitled to get rid of him on these grounds. In the previous case of a *bag-ma* marriage, such a reason could not be held against the wife, simply because she would never be authorized by her husbands to change her religion. She would have to be divorced first in order to do so.

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797 A *mag-pa* husband can be released from his marriage to an heiress if notorious misconduct on her part is proved. I was told that a woman in this position who would be divorced in this way would find it very difficult to remarry, as "nobody would want an immoral woman as a wife, whatever the property she may have".

If a husband wants to divorce his *bag-ma* wife or a wife is inclined to turn out her *mag-pa* husband, both of these are liable, in accordance with Kashmir customary law, to give a sum of money, the equivalent of a cow, to the divorced person; the name of such a monetary amount is *Mo-skyur-ba* (*Mo-bSkyur-ba*) meaning "woman thrown out cow". If,

on the other hand, the divorce occurs at the request of the *bag-ma* wife or of the *mag-pa* husband, the equivalent in money of a horse will be given to the injured party. This is called *P'ho-skyur-ta* (*P'ho-bSkyur-rTa*) or "man thrown out horse". During the reign of the Tibetan kings of Western Tibet, real horses and cows were handed over. But with the accession of the Dogra masters, Wazir-i-Wazarat Akbar Ali Shah, who ruled in Ladak in the early 1870s, converted the value of these animals into cash, a horse being estimated as worth Rs. 25, and a cow Rs. 12/8/-. Henceforward, compensation had to be paid in money and no longer in kind. [A35]

Extra-marital relations do occur in Ladak among polyandrous people, but on the whole all my informants, including the Reverend W. Asboe, were very insistant that those who practised polyandry were more "moral" than the others who did not. They meant by this, that the pressure of public opinion upon remaining faithful to the custom and not departing from what was expected of those living matrimonially in this fashion was very great and, usually, very effective in enforcing the rule. [837] [626]

In spite of this, it could not be said that departures from this moral rule did not occur. Lamas who had taken vows of celibacy, such as the Gelug-pas for instance, were known occasionally to get involved in illicit love affairs. A woman who was thus a partner to the strayings of a lama was known as a *la-dud* (*bLa-aDrud*), "dragger away of lama". [A92]

Unmarried girls who took lovers might be forced to marry them, if the man was unmarried. If he was already wed, he might have to divorce and marry the girl, or simply give her the necessary means of livelihood. Should she have a child by him, she would be turned out of her family's house and beaten, and the man would, in most instances, be obliged to marry her. The only exception could occur if he should already be married and have children, when he would have to arrange for the upkeep of his paramour and her child. As it was, this did not happen very often, all young girls normally being chaperoned when they attended public festivals. It was here that lovers met, it was admitted, but it would be difficult for an unmarried daughter, properly accompanied, to start an intrigue in this way. [836] [837] [848]

Women living in polyandry did have lovers, I was told, because they did not always feel the affection which they should have for their many husbands. A *bag-ma* wife caught in the act would be beaten, driven out of the house and divorced, if she was not yet a mother. If she had children, she would not be driven away, but her paramour would be [837] [684]

837 beaten and obliged to pay compensation to the outraged husbands.
684 Sometimes, I heard, the lover, assisted by friends, resisted and a fight ensued, in which the husbands' party might also be reinforced by friends and relatives. In the end a third party would be brought in to arbitrate and fix the amount of compensation due, if adultery was satisfactorily proved.

837 In the case of a *mag-pa* wife, or a *mag-pa* husband, I have already mentioned above, in what I wrote on divorce proceedings, what the correct behaviour is in cases of the partners' infidelity.

As a rule, immorality is something that attempts are made to conceal, and scandals do not occur often because everyone always tries to hush them up. One of the chief difficulties that has to be faced, if such a case becomes known and has to be dealt with in the glare of public knowledge, is the problem of property. A guilty couple will have none [735] to live on and, unless they can collect sufficient means to buy themselves at least a land tenancy, they will become beggars and be forced to live on grudging public charity.

848 The fate of illegitimate children is also a sad one. In most cases,
851 hushing up the affair consists in considering a child born of an adul-

847 terous union as one of the family. Abortions are nevertheless often resorted to, and in the case of unmarried girls frequently practised. In Leh, Moslem barbers are those who perform these operations. Un-

wanted children begotten in this way are often done away with, too, by the mother simply giving birth to the child near the river, and throwing [192] it into the water to drown. This is often the case with nuns in monas-

848 teries, who should be chaste in accordance with their vows. Most il-
792 legitimate children who live to be adult, become lamas or nuns. The
736 principal reason for this is again that they have no property and cannot marry. In this way, they can live off the resources of the monastery.

5. Dissolution of marriage by death

595 If the eldest husband of a woman dies, the widow is automatically the
736 official wife of the surviving eldest brother of the deceased, by inher-
768 itance. No marriage ceremony need be performed. If the woman does not like to live with this man and his younger brothers as she did during the lifetime of the eldest, but at the same time, does not like to leave the family household or to take yet another husband different from those she has had so far, or, again, if the surviving eldest brother does not wish to keep her as his wife, she is entitled in all these cases, to maintenance by the family. This takes the form of a piece of land

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smoking was looked upon as so heinous an offence. He replied that it was because, so the lamas said, tobacco was a weed grown from the menstrual flow of a prostitute who had prayed that it might fertilize a plant that would be the joy of mankind. For this reason, lamas could not think of smoking, and they naturally opposed it in the lay population as well.

c) Investigation of polyandry along the Leh-Srinagar Treaty Road

1. Information gathered at Spituk and Ri-dzong

At our first halt after leaving Leh, I gathered interesting information concerning polyandry in the central Tibetan provinces from the acting chief abbot of the monastery, who had studied in Lhasa. I shall revert to what he told me when we come to Part II, where I shall deal with the polyandry of Tibet proper.

At Ri-dzong, the Tibetan bandit, Norgyäs, had much to tell me also. He told me a certain amount about the marital customs of those parts of Tibet which he knew personally, but also about those specifically appertaining to Western Tibet. It is these which I shall account for here.

It seemed that my informant was born in Ngari Korsum and had only later in his life taken to banditry. At the age of nine, he was adopted by a lama, the assistant of the Garpön of Gartok, that is of the Tibetan Government official whose residence was in the capital of Ngari Korsum.

The lama's name was De-chen-la (*bDe-Ch'hen-lags*) and he had a sister living with him who was married and had a son, Dön-stob-la (*Don-sTobs-lags*), of the same age as Norgyäs. Although there was a relation of master to servant between the two boys (the lama's nephew being the superior), a very intimate bond was formed between the two. When Dön-stob-la married, Norgyäs was allowed to share the wife with him, and this because the two had become what he called *skyidug-chik-pa* (*sKyid-sDug-gChig-pa*).

This long word has the meaning of "Happiness-Grief-Identical" and such a relation is very often entered into in Tibet between close friends. Norgyäs said that, in his case, it was only a minor variety of the relation because, normally, it is a much more formal and binding connection.

Thus in Tibet, and also in Ladak, two old friends who had known each other for a long time could become *skyidug-chik-pa* in the following way. They make a vow, clasping each other's middle finger, in which they swear to share undividedly everything that they have for the rest of their lives, and even in the next one that awaits them. If

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one of them is married, or gets married later, it is agreed that the friends will also share the wife. When Don-chen-la died, Norgyäs was left alone with their common spouse, and he came to Ladak with her.

I asked the informant if he knew of cases of exchange of wives, in which married men had simply taken each other's wives, as I had heard of this before I visited Ladak, but had not been able to find any actual cases. He told me that this did happen, precisely between people who were *skyidug-chik-pa*. If they both married, they would exchange the women after some time, to show that they really did have everything in common, and then later revert back to those they originally had. Thus, he knew of a certain Changling Cholak and a *Dzong-pön* (*Dzong-dPon*) or magistrate, called Nichang(?), who were linked by such a "happiness-grief-identical" relation in Lhasa. They exchanged their wives in this manner, even after they had had children with them. The offspring did not, however, follow the mother, but remained with the father (presumably until the mother returned home again after some years).

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Norgyäs assured me, too, that wives were often offered to important guests when they visited a family, although the custom was declining. Joseph insisted that this did not exist in Ladak, and that he had never come across it there. Norgyäs, however, said that he knew of Ladaki cases of such hospitality too, and Joseph said that it must, then, be close to the Chang-t'hang borders. The bandit admitted that this was so, in the neighbourhood of lake Pang-kong, in the extreme east.

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2. Polyandrous families at Kalatse and Mulbek

On the 4th October 1938 at Kalatse, Joseph Gergan took me to a household named Gyamtso-pa, where there was a *porjag*, that is, where non-fraternal polyandry was practised. I made the genealogy of this family, and it is given in Table 35. The informant was Lha-dzom, a woman, about thirty five years old, with a lively manner, who seemed very pleased to give us all the details which we wished to learn from her. She and her two husbands, Tsering and Tsering P'hüntzok, together with her two children, Sonam Lhamo, a girl, and Kumchok Rabsang, a boy, lived in a *k'hang-chen*, while her first husband's father and mother lived in the *k'hang-gu*. Tsering's two sisters, who were older than him, had been married off in *bag-ma* to other households. The two children born to Tsering and Lha-dzom were as yet unmarried, although quite grown-up, and lived with their parents and their mother's second husband, Tsering P'hüntzok, the *porjag*.

[Text continues on p. 390]